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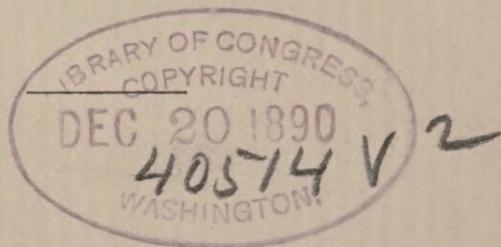
ROSE BRAKE

POEMS

BY

DANSKE DANDRIDGE

AUTHOR OF "JOY AND OTHER POEMS"



G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

NEW YORK LONDON
27 West Twenty-third St. 27 King William St., Strand
The Knickerbocker Press

1890

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DANSKE DANDRIDGE

The Knickerbocker Press, New York
Electrotyped, Printed, and Bound by
G. P. Putnam's Sons

TO
MY FRIEND
WILLIAM HAYES WARD, D.D.
I DEDICATE
THIS LITTLE VOLUME

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ROSE BRAKE.

I

HOPE.

Ah me ! what battles I have fought !
I would I knew the rune that lays
The swarming shades of weary days
That take the lonely House of Thought !
A restless rabble, unsubdued ;
A wild and haggard multitude ;
Distorted shapes that spring from tears,
And torments born of wedded fears.

Sometimes, amid the changing rout,
A rainbowed figure glides about,
And from her brightness, like the day,
The whimpling shadows slink away.

I know that lyre of seven strings ;
The seven colors of her wings ;
The seven blossoms of her crown :—
 There violets twine for amethyst ;
Small lilies white as silk-weed down ;
 There myrtle sprays her locks have
 kissed ;
And pansies that are beryl blue ;
And varied roses, rich of hue ;
With iridescent loving eyes
Of buds that bloom in Paradise.

Come often, thou ethereal child !
 New-string thy lyre and sing to me.
Thy voice ecstatic, fresh and wild,
 Enthralls each dark-browed phantasy.

Beyond the walls she bids me peer
To see a Future, dim and dear ;

Sweet faces shining through the mist
Like children waiting to be kissed ;
A lovely land that knows not pain ;
Atlantis land beyond Life's main,
Where we who love may love again—
Ah me ! is this beyond the plan
Of God's beneficence to man ?

THE WOOD DEMON.

I.

SPELLBOUND.

I.

Within this wood there is a sprite ;
He blows his horn both noon and night ;
He blows his horn both night and day ;
But once he blew my soul away.
He has a lyre ; he has a lute ;
He has a viol and a flute.

There are strange blossoms in the wood ;
Their hue is as the hue of blood ;
And in what nook these blossoms grow

There is no wight but him doth know.
He finds and plucks them, stem by stem,
And wreathes his cap and horn with them ;
Then sits and pipes beneath his tree,
 Airily, O airily.

II.

Of all the women of my race
There is no fairer form or face ;
None wedded to a braver man
Of all the women of my clan ;
Of all the birds that sing and fly
None bore so light a heart as I.
One day I loitered in the glen,
Apart from sight and sound of men ;
Afar I heard an elfin horn—
Alas ! that ever I was born !
I saw, as softly I drew nigh,
What ne'er was seen by mortal eye ;

I heard, and still at times I hear,
What ne'er was heard by mortal ear.
But when I saw that blood-red flower
I felt the demon's eerie power,
And when I heard that luring strain
I knew I ne'er might rest again.

III.

Sometimes, when dews of evening fall,
The message of the fairy horn
Upon the singing breeze is borne :
I leave my good-man in the hall,
I leave my home, my children, all,
To follow where it summons me,
Airily, O airily.

IV.

When from the forest I return,
My pulses throb, my temples burn.
“O Mother dear, your eyes are wild ;

You tremble," cries my fairest child.

"Your face is drawn and pinched and
old ;

Your head is hot, your hands are cold.

O Father, Father, much I fear,
It is not well with Mother dear."

My good-man groans ; he does not speak ;
The piteous tears run down his cheek.

The children cluster round my knee
To hear a slumber song from me.

I rock the youngest on my breast,
And put an arm about the rest.

My eldest daughter stands aloof,
And reads me with her eyes of ruth.

I bring them blossoms from the wood,
But not the flower whose hue is blood ;
I sing them songs of every bird,
But not a song of all I heard

That mocking pixy pipe to me,
Airily, O airily.

v.

When all the place is still in sleep,
By turns I laugh ; by turns I weep ;
By turns I sing ; by turns I pray ;
So wears the restless night away.
My step is slow ; my cheek is pale ;
I feel my vital forces fail.
Ere long I know that I must lie
A-tremble 'neath a gleaming eye ;
And as my heart-beats die away
His wildest weird that sprite will play ;
And as I draw my feeblest breath
His sweetest strain will mock at death ;
And when, at last, my spirit flies,
He will not pause to close mine eyes,
But he will sing my threnody,
Airily, O airily.

II.

THE FAIREST CHILD.

I.

Upon the eve of holy-day
All weary on my bed I lay,
(Sure never yet in woman's breast,
Beat such a heart of fierce unrest !)
When, as I wept to give me ease,
A summons floated down the breeze ;
It was the demon calling me,
 Airily, O airily.

II.

My good-man was away from home.
I said : “ Alas ! mine hour is come.”

I rose, I heaved a piteous sigh,
I said : " Mine hour is come to die."
I kissed my children, one by one,
I gazed their sleeping forms upon ;
But when I kissed my fairest child,
Her cheeks were wet, her eyes were wild ;
My little maid who might not sleep
Because she heard her mother weep.

III.

I threw the casement open wide,
Nor knew that she was by my side.
The moon was very near the full,
The scudding clouds were white as mull.

With softest tread of naked feet,
And little heart that beat and beat,
Through the dark forest, piteously,
My fairest daughter followed me.

I did not pause to glance behind,
For still I heard, upon the wind,
That distant piping summon me,
 Airily, O airily.

IV.

At length I reached the charmèd ring
Wherein that demon sat to sing ;
His lark-like strain was sweet to hear,
And slowly, slowly, I drew near.
It was a hollow, dank and dern,
With tumbled grass and tangled fern.
Again I smelted the blood-red flower—
Ah me ! it was a fearful hour.
He smiled, he beckoned with his hand,
I had no power to sit or stand,
He held me with his gleaming eye,
I had no power to speak or cry.
I sank upon the matted grass,

And waited for my soul to pass,
The while he sang my threnody,
 Airily, O airily.

v.

I looked my last on east and west ;
My spirit struggled in my breast.
I looked my last on south and north,
My spirit striving to be forth ;
But, as I closed my glazing eye,
I heard my fairest daughter cry :
“ O Mother, Mother, do not die ! ”
I heard my fairest daughter say :
“ O Mother, Mother, rise and pray ! ”
Without the ring of charmèd trees
My child she fell upon her knees.
Her face was white, her feet were bare ;
Her hands were clasped in fervent prayer ;
Her locks were loose upon the breeze.

She prayed, her voice was weak with fear :
“ O Jesus, save my mother dear ! ”
The setting moon was very bright ;
Good sooth, it was a holy sight.

VI.

Just as the precious name she said,
The demon paused, and reared his head ;
A discord marred his dreamy strain ;
He writhed as one in mortal pain ;
He threw his horn upon the path,
And fled as one who flees from wrath.
He left his lyre, he left his lute,
He left his viol and his flute.
The blossoms drooped as in a swoon ;
They turned to blood-drops on the ground ;
And where I lay, beneath his tree,
The dripping blood-drops clung to me.

VII.

My daughter sobbed, her voice was low :
“ O dearest Mother, let us go ! ”
She stooped, she raised me by the hand ;
Her presence gave me strength to stand.
The moon had set ; the way was drear ;
We shook with cold ; we sobbed with fear ;
But softly, softly, all the way,
The maiden did not cease to pray ;
And when the dreary night was past
We knelt together, safe at last.
The day, the holy day was born ;
It was the blessed Easter morn.

VIII.

And now what more remains to tell ?
My fairest daughter prayeth well ;
She prayed my spirit free from spell.

But I was weaker than a child ;
My looks were strange ; my words were
wild ;
For many days my fever raged,
By thoughtful tenderness assuaged,
For woman-like and skilfully,
My blessed maiden tended me.

IX.

Sometimes, within the dusky hall,
I deem I hear the spirit-call,
And then, my troubled soul to calm,
I drown it with a holy psalm.
Sometimes, upon my bed at night,
I wake and shiver with affright,
Or lie asleep from dusk to morn,
And dream I hear the demon horn ;
Afar, I dream, it summons me,
 Airily, O airily.

THE FAIRY CAMP.

What did I see in the woods, to-day ?

I saw a fairies' gypsy-camp.

The tents were toadstools, brown and
gray,

Among the bracken, soiled and damp.

I called on a cowslip 'mid the green,

And borrowed a bit of fairy gold,

And then I found the gypsy-queen,

And so I had my fortune told.

Ah, yes, she told me a secret true,

That wild-eyed gypsy, brown and red !

But I may not tell it out to you,

For that would break the charm, she said.

And if you seek them by yourself
 You will not find that strolling band ;
They have pilfered the wild bees' hoarded
 pelf,
And flitted away to another land.

THE DRYAD.

'T is my pleasure not to know
Much of mortal joy or pain ;
Blithely through my life I go
With playful fancies in my brain.
A furtive creature, wild and shy,
I may not meet a mortal eye :
In densest woods alone I lurk
To watch the building birds at work.
Like a free, fantastic elf,
I weave my hair with berries red ;
Flit and frolic by myself,
And mock the singers overhead.

I used to be a thing of bliss ;
I knew no other life than this ;

But on a day, a golden day,
I found a mortal far astray.
I heard his foot-fall on the grass,
And held my breath till he should pass.
He had a free and rustic grace,
An agile frame, a swarthy face ;
His coat was green, his cap was red,
His black locks tangled round his head.
I deemed him, as he loitered by,
Almost as beautiful as I.

He paused within an open glade,
And many a solemn word he said ;
And ever, when he ceased to speak,
Large tear-drops trickled down his cheek.
His eyes gazed upward through the air ;
I looked, but there was nothing there.
He raised his arms, hand clasped in
hand ;

His words I could not understand ;—
Then sighed and smiled, and so was gone.
'T was then I learned I was alone !

When young birds chirp themselves to
sleep,

I sometimes wish that I could weep ;
I sit me down upon a stone
And feel that I am all alone ;
I rest my cheek upon my hand
And sigh, but nothing understands ;
I sing—my very songs are sad ;
I would I ne'er had seen the lad !
Ah me, I feel what must be pain ;
Would I might see the lad again !

MAY.

When Eve went out from Paradise
With looks distraught and sad surmise,
And when she tried to make a home
 For Adam in the thorny land,
 By kinship I can understand
The homesick longing that would come,
The sad and lonely memories
Of Eden trees and Eden skies.
At sunset, when her work was done,
Perchance she sat to muse alone,
 And hear the Eden waters flow.
The birds might sing, but she was mute,
Still tasting in her mouth the fruit,
 That sweet beginning of her woe.

Perchance some bird that she had fed
Would come to flutter overhead—
Some happy bird that built his nest
 Within the cherub-guarded spot,
Would come to thrill her aching breast
 With tender jargon, unforget ;
Or bring her in his beak a flower
 She planted in a peaceful hour.

What heritage, O weeping Eve,
Your wistful daughters yet receive
Of yearnings, and of longing pain,
For that which may not come again !
What dim, inherited desire,
Still thwarted by the swords of fire !

Yet when the riot garden-close
Just hints the coming of the rose ;
When sumptuous tulips burst apart,

And rock the wild bee, heart to heart ;
When languid butterflies a-swing
From apple-blossoms droop the wing ;
When purple iris, by the wall,
Imperial iris, proud and tall,
With Persian lilac is a-blow,
And nodding lilies, row by row ;
When hoyden creepers run a-pace
To kiss the lime-rock's wrinkled face ;
When snowball turns from green to white
 And keeps the secret that she knows,
The pretty secret, out of sight,
 Wherein the robin's household grows ;
And when we pace the pleachèd aisles
 And share, with tender words and smiles,
The beauty of the summer feast,—
'T is then we miss our Eden least.

SYMPATHY.

We talked together, you and I ;
It was a queenly night in June :
Low hung the moon in yonder sky,
And on your cheek low glanced the
moon.

Your gentle hand was mine to hold :
My ill-fed heart began to speak ;
And ever, as the tale was told,
Dear friend, the moon was on your
cheek.

Old loss that would not let me rest,
Old grief that slept, but ever lay

A languid load upon my breast,
Awoke, and wept themselves away.

Up climbed the moon ; slow waned the
night ;
And still you bent to hear me speak ;
I drank the comfort of the light
In those bright tears upon your cheek.

From off my life the burdens fall :
Still in their grave through tranquil years
They rest, those weary sorrows, all,
That faded in the light of tears.

THE PRELUDE.

What is astir where the shadows are dense ?
Something that baffles the curious sense ;
Something that shimmers and whispers and
 sighs ;
Something that glimmers to far-reaching
 eyes ;
The Shape of a song, or the Soul of a
 stream,
Or a Being awake from a beautiful dream,
Is pulsing and stirring and making prelude
In the reverent heart of the reverend wood.

Is it a word that I never have heard ?
Is it a hint of a jubilant bird

That never was hinted before ?
Oh ! what can it be that is new in the wood;
That thrills with its meaning, but half-
understood,
A rapture and more ?
A sound is created that never the breeze
Has carried till now through the city of
trees :
Fresh tidings from God ; a new message is
sent
Through I know not what delicate instru-
ment.

And I would I had senses as fine as a sprite,
To hear and interpret the message a-right :
But I think, oh, I think, as I fall on my
knees,
God is walking and talking again 'mid the
trees,

THE FAIRIES' MASQUERADE.

Who hath not heard, when life was young,
At nurse's or at grandam's knee,
Enthralling stories, said or sung,
Of magic realms of faërie ?
Of elves that sport beneath the moon,
Around the hazel or the thorn,
While crickets chirp a dancing tune
Till all the east is red with morn ;
Of how they freak with tricksy plays ;
Or slide adown the moony rays :
Now at their round stone table sit,
A dainty leaf their table-cloth ;
While fire-fly waiters 'round them flit,
They sup their steaming sweet-pea broth.

The meal is heaped upon the board ;
'T is part the brown bees' cherished hoard ;
A salad of the water-cress,
Which with wild mustard-seed they dress,
With sour and pepper grasses too,
And oil distilled from meadow-rue.

They 've butter in a butter-cup ;
Sippets of pollen dipped in dew ;
Wine in blue-bottles bottled up ;
And cakes of violets dried with care ;
Bread of the flour of mignonette ;
Wild strawberries in cordial wet
Of elder-juice, well-spiced and rare—
Would I might taste the fairies' fare !

At peep of dawn they 'd steal away,
And lurk amid the flowers all day :
But now, alas ! through many a night,
Beside the old witch-hazel tree,

We 'd vainly watch till morning light,
Nor hint of fairy frolic see.

And are they exiled from the earth ?
In some remoteness of a star,
Where no intrusive mortals are,
They hold fantastic revelry ;
With pranks and airy jollity ;
With laughter shrill, and antic mirth,
They trip around the favored tree ;
There summer lasts the whole year long,
And life is like a cheery song.

And do they ne'er revisit earth
To view the haunts that gave them birth ?
Ah, yes ! though not in elfin guise,
But in some garb of insect dressed,
In shape as suits the fancy best,
Of motley moths or shining flies ;

Or some shy creature of the wood
May better please the wayward mood.

Yon bird, scarce bigger than a bee,
That darts about the tulip-tree,
A radiant, rainbow-colored thing,
Now poising on its humming wing,
May be a princess in disguise ;
Or yonder troop of butterflies
That share with bird and bee, and sup
A draught from every flower-cup ;
And chase each other wantonly,
With many a freakish pleasantry ;
That flutter o'er the clover heads,
And suck the sweets of lily beds ;
May be an errant elfin band,
Bright mummers out of fairy-land,
To visit each accustomed place,
In beechen dell or bosky glade,

And idle there a little space
To hold their frolic masquerade ;
Then, flitting through the pearly sky,
Up to their new-found home they fly,
And bid the prosy earth good-by.

DREAMS.

Run with me, elves, and lay me on that bed
Bud-strewn beneath my cirque of sister
trees,

Where-through the young Moon hath em-
broideréd

Faint soothing-spell in silver traceries ;
Run with me, for I feel the need of dreams ;
Earth palls, and naught is fair but that
which seems.

Fashion thin horns of blossom-tubes and
blow ;

Tinkle the lucent pebbles of the rill ;
Fetch me a mating bird to twitter low ;

Spin sounds of night, fine-drawn, remote
and shrill ;
And let that elfin whom I hold most dear
Whisper a certain name within mine ear.

Then, while I sleep, the very tender Moon
Ne'er dreamed such sport with her En-
dymion,
Nor any love-rapt mortal, late or soon,
Such snatch of rapture from the Im-
mortals won
As I, that, waking, have become so dull,
But in my dreams, so glad and beautiful.

THREE DAYS.

It was a wild and lonely hill,
And in the long grass at my feet
You lay : the breeze was almost still,
Poising on airy wings, and sweet
With clover breath of resting cows ;
The light fell softly through the boughs ;
That light was dear for dear Love's sake :
'T was there our hearts began to wake.

We watched the summer sun arise,
Standing together on the lawn ;
Then turned, and in each other's eyes
We gazed to watch another dawn.
We felt the radiance of the sun ;
Our day of love was just begun :

That day was sweet for sweet Pain's sake :
'T was there our hearts began to ache.

They call the old wood Fairy-land :
I know we lovers loitered there :
'T was nightfall ; we were hand in hand ;
While distant thunder stirred the air.
Your trembling tones were low and deep ;
We smiled, we laughed—lest we should
weep ;

Then—parted, for dear Honor's sake :
For Honor's sake—for Honor's sake :
That spot is dear for Honor's sake :
'T was there our hearts began to break.

LONGINGS.

I.

What of the loves that glow
In the warm breast ?
What of the hopes that grow
Into unrest ?
Hopes we may never know,
Still unconfessed.

What of the tears that well
In the hid eyes ?
What of the griefs that swell
As they arise ?
Griefs that we dare to tell
Only by sighs.

II.

What of the looks that speak ?
What of the changing cheek ?
“ Silent, my dear, and shy ? ”
Needless are words, and weak :
Into the depths I seek
Of thy clear eye.

III.

What of the hiding veils ?
What of the doubt that quails
What of the yearning throe
“ Love, shall I *never* know ? ”
What of the faith that fails ?
What of the no-avails ?

What of the hearts that break
For a sweet passion’s sake ?

O my own parted friend,
Over the distance send
 By thy soul-sympathy,
One little message dear,
Vapor of one small tear
 Given to me.

LOVE'S SACRIFICE.

I know you long for me to-night ;
I know you hurt impatient hands
Against the sepulchre that stands
O'er our delight.

If I could only comfort you,
Could come to-night in spirit form,
Yet with my glad heart beating warm
To find you true ;

And lay your head upon my breast,
And hush your sighs of pain, and still
Your eager yearning, at my will,
And give you rest.

Yet here, so many leagues away,
To grieve for you is all my part,
To feel your sorrow in my heart,
To love and pray.

Yet *is* this all ? It *is* not so.
You know me fond ; you know me true ;
My life is crowned with love of you,
And *this* you know.

What then ? If we must never meet—
To feel each other's sympathy
Through all the leagues of land and sea,
Is *this* not sweet ?

My comrade-soul, our prayers arise
Like incense from our broken will,
Which on God's altar burneth still,
Love's sacrifice.

PARTED.

O that I stood in the presence of God ;
In the palpable presence of God,
 And had voice for one cry !
That my body were dead and my soul were
 alive
In the light of that visible Eye.

“God ! give me one boon for my life
 That was patient and long ;
For the waiting ; the years—oh, the
 years !
For the hunger and tears ;
For the hurt and the wrong :—
God ! grant me one boon for my life.

“ Somewhere — oh, Thou knowest the
where —

In thy worlds with their heavens and
hells,

In the limitless spaces of air,
He *is*, and Thou knowest the where !
A boon, oh, a boon ! Send me there !

“ For I bore it, the worst that was sent ;
The pitiless ache of the tears ;
The loss and the fierce discontent,
And the horror and fears
Of that silence more hard than a wall !
And the fancies, so maddeningly sweet,
More cruel than all :—
By the love that is deathless I call
As I fall at thy feet.”

*Would I cry ? Would the floods be unsealed
In that Presence, in sight of the Thrones ?*

Would I jar the loud joy of the blest
With my strenuous tones ?
Or stand with my hand on my mouth
Unable to praise or to pray :
Just *feeling*, “ Thou knowest it all,
What *is* there to say ? ”

THE STRUGGLE.

“ Body, I pray you, let me go ! ”
(It is a Soul that struggles so.)
“ Body, I see on yonder height
Dim reflex of a solemn light ;
A flame that shineth from the place
Where Beauty walks with naked face :
It is a flame you cannot see ;—
Lie down, you clod, and set me free.

“ Body, I pray you, let me go ! ”
(It is a Soul that striveth so.)
“ Body, I hear dim sounds afar,
Dripping from some diviner star ;
Dim sounds of holy revelry :
It is my mates that sing, and I

Must drink that song or break my heart ;
Body, I pray you, let us part.

“Comrade ! your frame is worn and frail ;
Your vital force begins to fail ;
I long for life, but you for rest ;
Then, Body, let us both be blest.
When you are lying 'neath the dew
I 'll come, sometimes, and sing to you ;
But you will feel nor pain nor woe ;
Body, I pray you, let me go !”

Thus strove a Being : Beauty-fain,
He broke his bonds and fled amain.
He fled : the Body lay bereft,
But on its lips a smile was left,
As if that Spirit, looking back,
Shouted upon his upward track,
With joyous tone and hurried breath,
Some message that could comfort Death.

THE DOVE ON THE MONUMENT.

Sometimes, when vesper sparrows flit,
And trill their tranquil even-song,
Within a peaceful place I sit
 And muse, the mounded graves among.
I know, nor brings the thought a sigh,
That here my outgrown frame must lie,
Nor would I choose a happier lot
Than here to lie, my life forgot,
And let the soothing silence rest
The old-time tumult of my breast,
Till, at the coming of my King,
I rise to give him welcoming.

The summer's heat is tempered here,
Nor seems the winter's breath severe :

50 *THE DOVE ON THE MONUMENT.*

Here every choicest shrub and tree
May bud and bloom luxuriantly ;
Here singing birds of every kind
Secluded sanctuary find :
With carollings the air they fill,
With warblings sweet, or whistlings shrill,
For here no ruthless sportsmen come,
Nor noisy troops of impish boys
May violate each treasured home,
And fright the parents from their joys,
Till, fretted by domestic cares,
They lose their songs and sportive airs.
But quiet mourners bringing wreaths,
Move on with such a reverent tread,
That naked nestlings, 'mid the leaves,
May boldly stretch each callow head
And peer above their crowded bed ;
And anxious mothers scarce will fly
When such soft footsteps pass them by.

When once, with sauntering step and slow,
I loitered here in pensive mood,
Content with tranquil solitude,
And with my quiet thoughts content,
Anon I raised my eyes, and lo !
A dove upon a monument
Stood for a moment motionless,
And seemed the sacred spot to bless.

She knew no cause for fear of me
To mar her calm security,
But brooded there a little space,
 Outlined against the evening's gray,
As though she loved the hallowed place ;
Then, bending with a gentle grace,
 Spread her soft wings and passed away.

'T is well, I thought, this mourning dove,
Emblem of heavenly peace and love,
Should make, where these tired sleepers rest,
In this still spot, her sheltered nest.

THE WHITE ROSE.

I see, in the garden border,
A dream of beauty there,
For the white rose blooms, in order
That the moon may call her fair.

In the tangled garden, lonely,
No other bloom is nigh :
The trellised roses, only,
And the white rose in the sky.

And all the night is sleeping
Except the whippoorwill,
And the distant mountains keeping
A drowsy vigil, still.

Come out to the garden, lover,
And drink the dreaming rose,
And bid the moon discover
The secret that she knows.

Then turn to the lady tender
And read, in her eyes' love-light,
The meaning they surrender
Of the rose, and the moon, and the night.

A REMONSTRANCE TO FANCY.

Fancy ! Fancy ! let me be !
Cease to jibe and jeer at me !
Old friend, you are no longer kind.
 Why make a league with Discontent ?
My eyes to present good you blind,
And weave an artful tapestry
 Of pictured joys and beauties blent ;
Eerie with what can never be ;
An elvish glamour over all,
Fitful and fantastical ;
Bewildering, and rich and strange,
 With tints of wild, elusive hope,
As intricate, and prone to change
 As forms of a kaleidoscope.

Dear Fancy, let this fooling end !
I long to keep you for my friend,
To fling a rainbow, now and then,
 Blithely across my spirit's heaven ;
With shapes too fine for mortal ken
 To limn the painted skies of even ;
Or in dark winter months to throw
A summer landscape o'er the snow.

But, wilful fairy, tempt me not
To think, to do—I know not what—
Do not you my pleasures wrong
With your deluding siren song,
And poisoned whisper, “ Better far
The gifts in my bestowal are ! ”
Or kindle longings in my frame
That like a sudden-leaping flame,
Scorch and shrivel and destroy
Glad Innocence and Peace and Joy.

Come, with looks serene and fair,
And a mild engaging air :
Then, if you give a hand to Trust,
And one to Honor, do your will ;
Freak and frolic if you must,
But be a friend to Reason still.

Or come, as erst, in quaintest guise,
And let amusement light your eyes :
Like a hoyden, flushed and free,
Taking liberties with me :
Strip my sober working dress :
Deck me in all daintiness :
Dimple as you used to do,
And I will gayly go with you :
But shine with no uncanny gleam,
Like a tricksy, teasing sprite,
Or a will-o'-the-wisp at night
Dancing up a sluggish stream :

Keep the thoughts I should not think :
Keep the dreams I dare not dream ;
And do not sport so near the brink
Of that wild chasm, scarped and steep,
Where late you sported in my sleep.

THE FOUR-LEAVED CLOVER.

We went a-walking on a day—
I and my Irish lover,—
And strange to say, upon the way,
We found a four-leaved clover.
“Good luck !” my happy swain did cry,
And pinned it on my breast ;
And then—why should I amplify ?—
All lovers know the rest.

They know what foolish things were said,
What foolish things were done,
On what light wings the moments sped
Until the set of sun ;
And neither cared to look beyond,
Nor con the future over,

For I was young and he was fond,
And all the world was clover.

O happy days ! too quickly flown,
That memory oft retraces !
We two have sadder, wiser grown,
And care has lined our faces ;
Yet still I sometimes look and smile
Upon a faded leaf,
And with a tender thought beguile
My hours of pain and grief.

And I have been a happy wife
These dozen years and over ;
And he has led a useful life—
He raises wheat and clover.
But all the luck we found that day,
I often think with wonder,
Was in the Fate we both obey
Which tore us twain asunder.

FOLLY-LAND.

In Folly-land what witchery !
What pretty looks, what eyes there be ;
What gamesome ways ; what dimpled
smiles ;
What lissome limbs ; what frolic wiles ;
What easy laughter, fresh and clear ;
What pranks to play ; what jests to hear !
Old Time forgets to shake his sand ;
The days go tripping, hand in hand,
In Folly-land, in Folly-land.

In Folly-land, one idle hour,
The moonlight had a wizard power ;
Its eerie glamour turned my brain :
(I would that I were there again !)

We stood together, 'neath the sky :
A bird was chirping drowsily :
He smiled, he sighed, he held my hand.
Ah me ! Ah well,—we understand
'T was Folly-land, 't was Folly-land.

My sober friend, how worn your looks !
Your heart is in your mouldy books.
Here's half a cobweb on your brow !
I seldom see you jovial now.
Fling down your volumes and be free
To take a pleasure-trip with me.
Come, "Here's my heart, and here's my
hand!"
We'll launch our skiff and seek the strand
Of Folly-land, of Folly-land.

GLAMOUR-LAND.

Ah ! dim, lost Glamour-land,
On whose confines I stand,
Longing for home that shall be home no
more !

There stood my palace grand,
Where now, on either hand,
The fiery swords of seraphs guard the
door.

There once I roamed to cull
Dear hopes more beautiful
Than siren thoughts that musing monks
resist ;
Nothing too far or fair
But its mirage was there
Pictured upon the valley's rosy mist.

There each sweet day I heard
Songs of a brooding bird
Telling of purest pleasure yet to be :
 There, by the singing streams,
 Faint forms of darling dreams
Loitered and lingered hand in hand with
 me.

Ah, dim, dear Fancy-land !
Thy welkin, rainbow-spanned,
The softened light of halcyon hours o'er
 past
Fading away, away,
All the expanse is gray—
As fades the moon on nights too fair to
 last.

IN THE MEADOW.

In the moonlit meadow my darling sing-
eth,

My love that is mine since yesterday ;
To the cope of heaven her pure voice
ringeth,

And my heart-beats echo her roundelay.

The moon dips lower ; the stars peep over ;
They seem to flutter their silver wings ;
And down by her feet, 'mid the scented
clover,

The crickets are quavering drowsy
things.

The birds, half wakened, call each other,
They twitter faintly the boughs among :

“ Down there in the meadow she waits her
lover,
And sings her love in a happy song ! ”

The trees by the brookside bend to hear
her ;
The voice grows stronger, the clear
tones rise ;
Till the spotted moth-king pauses a-near
her
To bask in the light of her sunny eyes.

I slip by the marshes, I steal through the
clover,
Like the stealthy breeze of the fragrant
South,
To greet her, my darling, and claim, like
a lover,
The sweet of the song from her flower-
ing mouth.

FAIRY FARE.

Mabel, darling Mabel,
Dancing down the lane ;
Flitting, like a butterfly,
Between the drops of rain !
Now the sun, out-peeping,
Gleams upon her hair,
Glitters in the dew that decks
Her feet so small and bare.
Mabel, pretty Mabel,
So gentle and so wild ;—
She 's not like other children,
She 's half a fairy-child !
Ever watching, listening,
So quick of eye and ear,—

As though she saw what none could see ;
Heard, what none could hear.

In her bed at midnight,
By her sister's side,—
“ Tell me, Mabel darling,”
So the sister cried ;
“ Why are you so silent,
Who used to be so bright,
Whispering to yourself all day,
Wakeful half the night ?
Tell me, for I love you,
What has changed you so ?”
Then the little Mabel
Whispered shy and low :
“ Listen to my secret ;
I will tell you, dear,
What no other creature,
None but you must hear.

Last midsummer morning,
At the dawn of day,
I rambled through the meadows
For a lonely play.
In the willow copses,
We call the wilderness,
I found—but guess, dear sister,—
No, you could never guess !
I found a fairy table,
Round, and draped in white,
Where the fairies left it
Feasting over-night :
Heaped with tempting viands,
Dainty fruits and wine,
And sparkling crimson goblets,
All wreathed with partridge vine.”

“ But oh, my little Mabel ! ”
The frightened sister spake,

“ You did not taste the fairies’ fare,
Their bread you did not break ? ”

Alas, the pretty maiden,
She shook her curly head,
To her anxious sister,
Whisp’ring low, she said :
“ I sipped a sip of fairy wine,
I tasted fairy bread !

“ I ate and drank,” quoth Mabel,
“ And from that happy day,
With mortal children, large and rough,
I have not cared to play ;—
But I am ever waiting,
The coming of a band,
To follow, follow, follow,
Away to fairy-land ;
“ And so I watch and listen,
Until the elfins come,

To take me for their playmate,
To make with me my home."

Then up arose the sister,
And to the woods she went ;
With the woodland creatures,
A summer day she spent.
Asked the woodland creatures—
“ Tell me, I implore,
Must my little sister,
Live with us no more ? ”
Asked a squirrel, racing
Up a cherry-tree :
“ Tell me, pretty squirrel,
Tell the truth to me.”

But the squirrel chattered,
Frisked and chattered on ;
Ate a wild red cherry—
Flung to her the stone ;

Then away he frolicked,
With a laugh went he,
Scampered down the cherry
Up another tree.

Then the sister wandered
Onward patiently ;
Found a big bee buzzing
Round a flowering vine,
Sucking clover blossoms,
Quaffing scented wine ;
Asked of him so humbly,
Begged him so to stay,
That he hummed around her,
In his clumsy way :
When he found the maiden
Was no monstrous flower,
Off he flew in dudgeon
To his honey-tower !

Many birds and insects
 Flitted gayly by,
Pausing not to listen
 Nor to make reply :—
Till a yellow flicker,*
 Tapping on a tree,
Paused and listened gravely,
 Listened curiously :—
Heard the mournful story
 That the sister told,
Then, with many an antic,
 Pert and over-bold,
Answered while he neatly
 Preened his wings of gold :
“ The child that feeds on fairy food
 Never can grow old ! ”
“ O flicker, pretty flicker ! ”
 She said, with sob and sigh,
* The golden-winged woodpecker.

“ You mean my darling Mabel,
My little pet, will die ? ”
He spread his wings so lightly,
So lightly flew away ;
But the troubled sister
Wept the livelong day :
Until a vesper-sparrow,
Touched by her distress,
Lilted out his lyric
Full of tenderness :—
With a soothing message
Trilled the closing part,—
“ The child that feasts on fairy fare
Will keep a youthful heart ! ”

LATE CHRYSANTHEMUMS.

Beneath the last October sun
My drooping garden lies ;
A lovely woman, past her prime,
With haggard eyes.

She bloomed through many a sullen night,
Through many a sudden storm,
The breeze that fanned her tears away
Was fond and warm.

But now beneath the frost she lies,
A lone, neglected spot ;
Most like a heart by coldness chilled,
Where love is not.

The butterflies that shared her youth
Share now her dim decay ;
The birds that sought her in her joy
Have flown away.

But here and there amid the wreck,
The drift of leaves, appear
The hardy late chrysanthemums
To crown the year.

Strong, bright, courageous, as a smile
They cheer the withered place ;
Like the last charm pale Sorrow leaves
A faded face.

O Frost, that comes to all, that spoils
Our blossoms, one by one,
Mature these autumn flowers beneath
Our autumn sun.

76 *LATE CHRYSANTHEMUMS.*

That when the days are growing dim,
And nears the wished-for end,
Some flower, some smile, may still be ours
To give a friend.

And when, ere long, beneath the snow
We rest, secure from pain,
Like the old garden we shall find
Our flowers again.

INDIAN-SUMMER.

Yes, the sweet summer lingers still ;
The hazes loiter on the hill ;
The year, a spendthrift growing old,
Is scattering his lavish gold
 For a last pleasure.
The robins flock, but do not go ;
We share the word with footsteps slow,
 In sober leisure,
Or sit beneath the chestnut-tree,
Our hands in silent company.
Not yet, dear friend, we part, not yet ;
Full soon the last warm sun will set ;
The cricket cease to stir the grass ;
 The gold and amber fade away ;

The scarlet from the landscape pass,
And all the sky be sodden gray ;
Too soon, alas, the frost must fall
And blight the asters on the hill,
The golden-rod, the gentians, all,
And we must feel the parting chill.
But oh, not yet, not yet we part :
The Summer strains us to her heart :
The world is all a golden smile,
And we may love a little while ;
The Summer dies, and hearts forget,
And we *must* part,—not yet, not yet.

THE GUILTY LOVER AND THE MOON.

I see the marred Moon in the day,
How pale she is ! She steals away.
Like a beast the staghounds track
She flies, and never turneth back.
If I could know what she must know
A shrieking maniac I would go.

What scenes she peers at in the night !
Many a loathsome, deadly sight ;
Frightful acts and ghastly deeds ;
Hateful crimes as common as weeds ;
No wonder she is pale with fright.

She looks on horrid mysteries,
And never shuts her shrinking eyes ;
She hears the cries of the beaten wife ;
She hears small children plead for life ;
She sees where the murdered corse is hid ;
Where the miser opens his coffer's lid ;
She knows the pity of lives of shame ;

Every night she gazes on
Brutish acts without a name :—
No wonder she is pinched and wan.

The Sun on many a crime looks down ;
Many a crime in many a town ;
Many a time he drinketh blood ;
Evil he sees, and much of good ;
But he is bold, and bright, and strong,
And thinks he knows the right of wrong.
He scatters his bounty everywhere,
And smiles with a hearty, devil-may-care ;

A brave old optimist is he,
But the Moon is timid as she can be.
For all the treasure under the ground
I would not find what she has found.

O Moon, you watched us on that night,
Lingering in your softened light.
Full-faced, alone, you saw us stand,
Heart to heart, and hand to hand.
Flit on, flit on, o'er heaven's floor,
And carry on your linèd face
Until you wither in your place
One secret more, one secret more.

Be the Judgment late or be it soon,
I know that the Spirit of the Moon
Will stand as a witness at the rail,
And, shuddering, begin her tale ;
Every secret open wide ;

Naught forget and nothing hide ;
But till that Dooming Day shall come
The pale-faced coward must be dumb ;
Till every evil be confessed
She may not rest, she may not rest.

THE LAST NIGHT.

Ah ! how she trembles when the night is
long ;

And, sitting idle in her old arm-chair,
She hears the rude wind shout his drunken
song,

While thoughts that sleep in light and
only dare

To walk, like ghosts, on wildest nights
forlorn,

Hold ghostly council till the breaking
morn.

Thus, like the clangor of alarum-bells
When on a sleeping town the rabble
springs,

A ringing in her pulses sobs and swells,

And times the tune the Bacchant Tem-
pest sings ;

Thus beats the hurried tocsin in her
brain,

And all her soul is sacked by Fear
again.

“ Wild night ! wild fear ! strong love and
stronger sin !

Ah, recompense too just for me to bear !

The casement shudders back : It flutters in :
The trembling shadow of my guilt is
there :

In from the sleet, the night, the uproar
wild,

My shame and my despair, my child,
my child !

“ O little form that I may never fold !

Beyond my empty arms my baby stands :

It sobs, it cries, it shivers with the cold :
Its eyes are *his* ; it wrings its tiny hands.
Ah, God, my baby, that may never
rest
In dewy slumber on my guilty breast !

“ It was not I, thou little ghost, not I ;
I slept as one who would not wake again ;
They stole thee in my sleep. I could not
die,

But woke to loss, and emptiness, and
pain.

Oh, heinous crime to save an honored
name,
That none might point a finger at my
shame !

“ Here in my bosom burns a fiery tide
No velvet baby-lips will suck away.
O cruel hurt of love ! O hellish pride !

O murdered baby, take your eyes away !
Thou weary child no mother-love can
warm,
Flit out into the night, the sleet, the
storm.

“The wind is wilder. Ah, Christ, let me
die !

Oh, Tempest, blow away my listless
breath !

In some hid cavern with my child to lie—
O sudden hope, that gives me strength
for death !”

She leaves the chair : she wanders far
from home :

“I come, my little lonely one, I come !
I reach the river : oh, 't is cold, but
thou
Art colder still, and I am with thee
now.”

THE NIGHT-WATCH.

A shrouded woman sits through the dark
night

Upon the old roots of an oak, alone ;
She hears the wind ; she sees no point of
light :

She rocks herself, and cries, and maketh
moan.

The night grows wilder, and the owl is
out,

The field-mice tremble to his shivering
cry,

The mad wind beats the homeless leaves
about,

Thin shapes of evil souls are hurtled by.

She moans as one that mutters in his sleep,
With cold and writhen lips that dully
rave :

“Lo, I have murdered Love and lain him
deep.

And I must sit and watch beside his grave.”

LOST AT SEA.

Ah, many a time I have wept by night,
I have moaned with the moaning sea,
When the dear lost eyes of my dead delight
Looked out of her depths on me.

And many a time when the sea was calm,
And the moon was lying there,
I have caught the gleam of a snowy arm,
And the glimmer of flowing hair.

But I would I had died when the ship
went down
That was bringing my love to me,
When my hope, and my heart, and my all
went down
To the heart of the heaving sea.

How she moans all night for the cruel
deed ;

She moans, for she cannot rest ;
And she cradles my bride with the brown
sea-weed
In the swell of her troubled breast.

How she sucks my life with her sobbing
breath,

How she draws me with her spell,
Till I know that at last I shall sink in
death
Where the coiled sea-serpents dwell.

Then my spirit will haste to her resting-
place,

As she lies on the wreck-strewn floor ;
I will shelter my love in a close embrace
Till the sea shall be no more.

THE MESSAGE.

I dreamed I lived beside the talking sea,
And great white birds were neighborly to
 me ;
They brought me tidings strange from
 many lands,
And ate the broken limpets from my hands.

I tied a message to an osprey's breast,
And sent him o'er the foam upon my
 quest,
To find my love where southern billows
 beat,
And drop the folded question at his feet.

I watched beside the sea for many days,
And strained my sight across the briny
ways ;

I saw his arrow-wings that shot the blue,
And to my arms the errant osprey flew :

Straight to my arms, as to a place of rest ;
A drop of blood was on his snowy breast ;
Upon his snowy breast the stain was red,
And I was answered, and the bird was
dead.

THE LULLABY.

I.

The great white moon is wandering over
the sky,
And she sings as she goes ; 't is an ancient
lullaby :
The rocking sea looks up, for he hears her
song,
And a dropping stillness follows the sound
along.
'T is a spell for his lonely heart that she
sings so low ;
Stiller, and stiller, and stiller the billows
grow ;
Calmer, and calmer, the passionate heart
of the deep,

For she croons, and croons, till she croons
him away to sleep.

II.

And I and my heart are alone by the
quieted sea,
And my heart is burning and beating and
wild in me ;
But I know a white lady, magnetic, and
lustrous, and dear,
With a tranquil and delicate voice I am
starving to hear ;
And I would she were singing, singing,
singing so low,
Stiller, and stiller, and stiller my heart
would grow—
My turbulent heart, with its surge like the
surge of the deep,
Would be solaced, and silenced, and sung,
like the sea, to sleep.

EXALTATION.

Play on my soul, thou Spirit from the skies !
And with me rise
Far o'er the tops of upward gazing trees ;
That I, before so mute,
Transformed, become thy lute,
May learn the secret of all harmonies.
Be seated in a warm love-light ;
Play tenderly, and, from some tranquil
height,
Drop down clear notes of peace to men
below :
Possess me ; fly with me ; I care not where
we go.

Ah ! do not sing of pain !
But from the chords entice,
At eve, a touching strain ;
And, by some rare device,
Turn all my tears to music-pearls and set
About the borders of thy living lute,
To make, when thou dost sing,
Continuous murmuring,
Faint as the echo of a Naiad's flute,
But flowing with a cool, refreshing sound,
Like hidden waters springing from the
ground.

Sometimes, I pray thee, Spirit, linger long,
Over a drowsy song,
Such as new-mated thrushes lisp in sleep ;
Make it so soothing and so low
That they who lie awake and know
How tardily the moments come and go

All they who lie awake to weep
May feel it like a touch of tenderness,
And only they may hear, and only they
may bless.

Into thy music put the budding spring
With all her birds and every pleasant thing ;
With words like flowers thy singing pas-
tures set
To teach me to forget
The fury and the fret ;
The flexed chords that the world had keyed
 too low ;
The strident wail ; the shrilling discon-
tent,
And all the dissonance that marred me so
 Before I had become thy instrument.

FATE.

With Sodom apples fill thy harvest-bin ;
Barter heart-wealth for gold in Fashion's
mart ;
Traverse rough seas some distant port to
win,
Without a chart.

Fray the fine cord of Love until it break ;
Launch thy pirogue before the storm
abate ;
Tease the prone, sleeping Peril till it wake ;
Then rail at Fate.

MORNING ROSES.

O roses, glowing in this amber bowl !

O roses, gleaming in your happy dew !

I would I had some roses in my soul

As beautiful as you.

Such thoughts as children think in holy
mood ;

Such thoughts as infants' guardian forms
of light,

Or purest maidens dream in solitude,

Should be my roses white.

Stirrings of hope and joy as fair as brides ;

Such thoughts as victor souls in Heaven
think ;

Musings of saints with vision satisfied
Should be my roses pink.

With flaming zeal and infinite desire ;
With brave renewal after blight of woe ;
With strong endeavor and celestial fire,
My golden rose should glow.

A wise new plan for helping men forlorn ;
A sympathy of great compassion bred ;
A warmth of love from suffering nobly
borne,
Should be my roses red.

Had I such blossoms blowing in my soul
How gladly would I pluck them for my
King,
And bring them, brimming o'er Life's
golden bowl,
A morning offering.

THE SINGING HEART.

Thou Heart ! why dost thou lift thy voice ?
The birds are mute ; the skies are dark ;
Nor doth a living thing rejoice ;
Nor doth a living creature hark ;
Yet thou art singing in the dark.

How small thou art ; how poor and frail ;
Thy prime is past ; thy friends are chill ;
Yet as thou had'st not any ail
Throughout the storm thou liftest still
A praise that winter cannot chill.

Then sang that happy Heart reply :
“ God lives, God loves, and hears me
sing.

How warm, how safe, how glad am I,
In shelter 'neath his spreading wing,
And there I cannot choose but sing."

LINES ON THE DEATH OF SIDNEY LANIER.

Alas ! alas ! my brother, art thou gone ?
Has so much music from the dumb earth
fled ?

And must we love and yearn and labor on ?
Alas ! alas ! I cannot make thee dead !

Thou stainless knight without reproach or
fear !

Shall we who love thee never hear again
Thy wondrous voice ring grandly, clarion-
clear,

Above the clamor of life's battle-plain ?

Lo, where fair Georgia mourns and beats
her breast,
I mark the flashing of her diadem ;
Star-like it gleams upon her bended crest :
She wears thy glory there, her brightest
gem.

Through all the teeming land from ocean's
surge
To farther ocean is thy requiem borne :
The corn-fields rustle thee a sombre dirge
And droop for thee, O poet of the corn !

Sleep well, dear brother, in thy resting-
place,
Lulled by the murmur of a country's
sighs.
The sky above thee hath a mother's face,
And all the holy stars are loving eyes.

WINGS.

Shall we know in the Hereafter
 All the reasons that are hid ?
Does the butterfly remember
 What the caterpillar did ?
How he waited, toiled, and suffered
 To become the chrysalid.

When we creep so slowly upward ;
 When each day new burden brings ;
When we strive so hard to conquer
 Vexing sublunary things ;
When we wait and toil and suffer,
 We are working for our wings.

ARE YOU GLAD ?

Are you glad, my big brother, my deep-hearted oak ?

Are you glad in each open palm-leaf ?

Do you joy to be God's ? Does it thrill
you with living delight ?

Are you sturdy in stalwart belief ?

As you stand day and night,

As you stand through the nights and the
days,

Do you praise ?

O strenuous vine, do you run,

As a man runs a race to a goal,

Your end that God's will may be done,

Like a strong-sinewed soul ?

Are you glad? Do you praise?
Do you run?
And shall I be afraid,
Like a spirit undone;
Like a sprout in deep shade;
Like an infant of days:

When I hear, when I see and interpret
 aright
The winds in their jubilant flight;
The manifest peace of the sky and the
 rapture of light;
The pæan of waves as they flow;
 The stars that reveal
The deep bliss of the night;
 The unspeakable joy of the air;
 And feel as I feel,
And know as I know
 God is there?

Hush !

For I hear him—

Enshrined in the heart of the wood :
'T is the priestly and reverent thrush,
Anointed to sing to our God :
And he hymns it full well,
All I stammer to tell,
All I yearn to impart.

Listen !

The strain

Shall sink into the heart,
And soften and swell
Till its meaning is plain,
And Love in its manifold harmonies,
 that shall remain,
Shall remain.

THE STREAM AND I.

We ramble on, the stream and I,
Still singing, still companionless.
We run to find, beneath the sky,
Some arid spot, some life to bless.
The brook is dreaming of the sea ;
But I, fond spirit, dream of thee.

The brook's bright waters flow and flow ;
All lush and green his track appears ;
And it is given me to know
Some choral of the chanting spheres.
Our lives are tuneful as the birds,
With rippled song and gentle words.

And if, sometimes, we lurk apart
In secret grot or covert dale,
To bide a space and gather heart,
Anon we 're laughing down the vale.
Though rain or tears our forces swell,
We find the sun and all is well.

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